

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

1. (currently amended) A method for classifying pixels into one of a neutral category and a non-neutral category, the method comprising:

inputting a group of pixels within an image into a memory device, a color of each of the pixels being represented by a respective color identifier, wherein the color identifiers include components of a first color space;

transforming the first color space components of the color identifiers to a second color space;

determining an average color identifier of the group of pixels as a function of the color identifiers of the pixels in the group; and

classifying one of the pixels within the group into one of the neutral category and the non-neutral category as a function of the average color identifier by comparing the average color identifier in the second color space with a threshold color identifier in the second color space, the threshold color identifiers being determined as a function of a position along a neutral axis in the second color space.

2. (original) The method for classifying pixels into one of a neutral category and a non-neutral category as set forth in claim 1, wherein the inputting step includes: receiving the color identifiers into the memory device according to a raster format.

3. (original) The method for classifying pixels into one of a neutral category and a non-neutral category as set forth in claim 1, wherein the classifying step includes: comparing the average color identifier with a threshold color identifier function.